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TAGS: [PREL](#) [SU](#) [AU](#)

SUBJECT: AU PRESIDENCY: ETHIOPIAN PM MELES SAYS BASHIR
LACKS VOTES

Classified By: CDA Vicki Huddleston for reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: A/S Frazer told PM Meles that increasing U.S. engagement with the African Union would be jeopardized if the upcoming AU Summit in Khartoum elected Sudanese President Bashir the next President of the General Assembly. Meles said he did not think that Bashir had the votes to be elected, although Egypt and Libya supported his candidacy. End Summary.

¶2. (C) AF Assistant Secretary Frazer called on Prime Minister Meles Zenawi January 20 to discuss the Presidency of General Assembly of the African Union, UN Resolution 1640 on the Ethiopia/Eritrea border dispute and the Ethiopian internal political situation. The latter two issues are reported septel.

¶3. (C) Prime Minister Meles said that the issue of the AU Presidency was still pending and procedures for the election were not clear. He had talked to the Sudanese to let them know that seeking the Presidency was not in their interests or those of the AU. The South Africans were also working on the issue. A/S Frazer asked what Meles meant by procedures being "unclear." There must be some sort of elections, she speculated. Meles said that the Libyans and Egyptians supported Bashir and might be misleading him to believe that the votes were there, but others were telling Sudan not to contest. If all the states vote, Meles said, he doubted that Bashir could win.

¶4. (C) A/S Frazer asked if the first vote would be on the Bashir candidacy and a second vote on who would be the AU President. Meles said he thought the vote would be among all those who wished to contest the election for the Presidency of the AU. Frazer replied that the USG was planning to increase its engagement with the AU, but that engagement would be put in doubt if Bashir were chosen as President of the General Assembly. The US Congress might also block additional support to the AU, especially since the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS) was in Darfur to protect residents from attacks by, or supported by, Sudanese government forces. HUDDLESTON